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ABSTRACT

Institutions of higher education presently and in the future will be confronted with the problem of offering diversified programs to the students they are supposed to serve. All institutions are becoming more and more alike due to a one-sided emphasis on increased enrollment rather than accommodating that priority to increased program quality. A possible solution to this problem is the creation of cluster and upper division colleges. Each type of college would offer the atmosphere of a small college but would, at the same time, offer the variety of resources available at larger institutions. Another major benefit is a small college atmosphere, which encourages experimentation and offers alternatives to traditionalism as a means of combating the homogenization of higher education. The cluster college and upper division patterns of organization have yet to be thoroughly evaluated, and they deserve serious consideration by higher education planners. (HS)

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Cluster and Upper Division Colleges

NEW ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

American higher education is renowned for its diversity. Yet, as a number of recent reports of higher education have noted, our colleges and universities have become extraordinarily similar. Increases in both size and function have led to the multiplication of activities, with increasing confusion of institutional priorities. Students have been forced to make a choice, in the words of the Newman Report on Higher Education, "not between institutions which offer different modes of learning but between institutions which differ in the extent to which they conform to the model of the prestige university." In this regard a previous issue of this series, "The Changing Four-Year Colleges," noted the transformation of four-year state colleges in the South into multipurpose state universities.

One means of encouraging educational diversity is by creating new organizational forms to perform specialized functions. Thus this discussion focuses upon two relatively new and distinctive organizational forms in higher education: the cluster college and the upper division college. These forms have evolved primarily in response to problems associated with the size of individual institutions, and to increased upper level enrollments within a state system of higher education.

The Increased Size of Institutions

Perhaps more than any other factor, the rapid growth of higher education enrollments over the last 30 to 35 years both within individual institutions and within state systems of higher education has created a need for different types of organization. This growth has also produced a number of changes in the kinds of educational experiences which institutions of higher education have been able to offer their students.

While more than one out of six students enrolled in higher education institutions in 1937 attended a college enrolling less than 500 students, by 1967-68 only about one out of 50 students would be able to reflect nostalgically about college days at "Old Siwash" where, with less than 500 students, most if not all students knew each other and most students were provided with a common experience.

But the image of "Old Siwash" is not appropriate for the majority of individuals who attended college in the 1930s. Even in 1937, five out of ten students were enrolled in higher education institutions with 2,500 or more students. By 1968, eight of ten students were attending institutions of this size, and with the emergence of the "multiversity" an institution enrolling 2,500, 5,000, 10,000 or even 15,000 students was not considered particularly large. In 1968 some 60 institutions enrolled 20,000 or more students. (Figure 1.)

Figure 2 indicates changes in the distribution of institutions in the United States by size categories for the academic years 1937-38 and 1967-68. Just within the last decade, the average size of colleges and universities has increased dramatically from 1,828 students in 1960 to 3,146 students in 1969. Disturbances since those at Berkeley in 1964-65 have caused many within and without the higher education community to wonder if the large university is manageable and how well, with its depersonalization and bureaucratization, it can continue as a constructive force in today's society.

Unlimited expansion, if it was ever deemed desirable, is no longer regarded as good in itself. University trustees, state higher education coordinating boards and state legislators are increasingly interested in employing enrollment ceilings or limitations in

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order to curb growth. Consider the following actions both within and outside the SREB region:

- In Texas, the former chairman of the University of Texas Board of Regents noted that within the next five years, more than half of the state-supported institutions will have to limit their enrollments. He pointed out that without enrollment limitations, the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Houston would in 1980 reach enrollments of 80,000 and 50,000 students respectively.

- In Maryland, the Maryland Council for Higher Education recommended to the Governor and General Assembly that freshman and sophomore admissions to the University of Maryland at College Park should remain static and Towson and Morgan State Colleges should build no more dormitories until smaller state colleges have increased their enrollments.

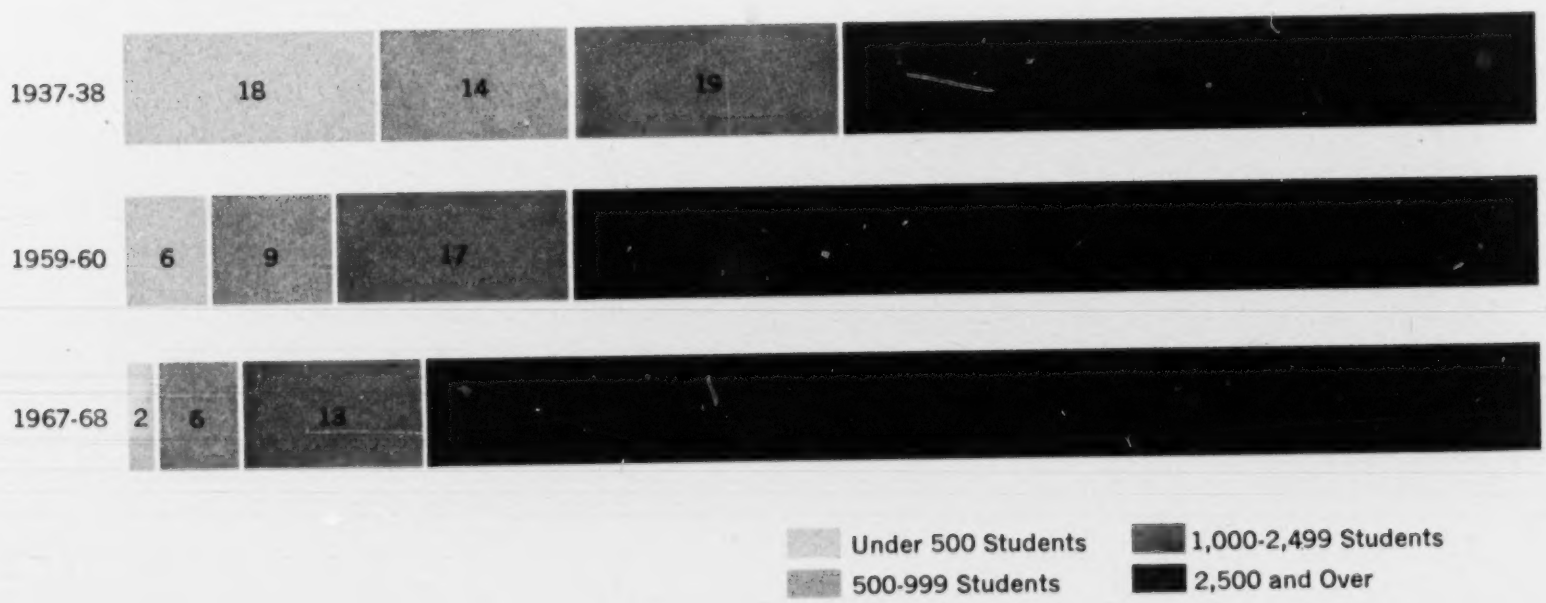
- In Illinois, a special committee appointed by the Illinois Board of Higher Education to investigate issues related to the questions of institutional size and capacity recommended that no college or university should be allowed to plan for a growth of more than 1,000 full-time-equivalent students per year and that no institution should be funded for growth that exceeds the 1,000 full-time-equivalent figure. Moreover, any excess growth that occurred in a given year was to be deducted from the growth permitted in the following year.

- In Florida, some lawmakers have expressed concern over the size and administrative structure of the universities and have indicated that they want the Board of Regents to establish a maximum size for the universities to keep them from becoming too large to manage.

The debate over how big a college or university should be continues. From an economic standpoint, Peter Drucker, Seymour Harris and Clark Kerr have noted that institutions enrolling less than 1,000 students are of necessity high-cost operations in terms of per student expenditures. Some marginal cost savings are apparent as institutions expand into the 1,500-2,000 enrollment range.

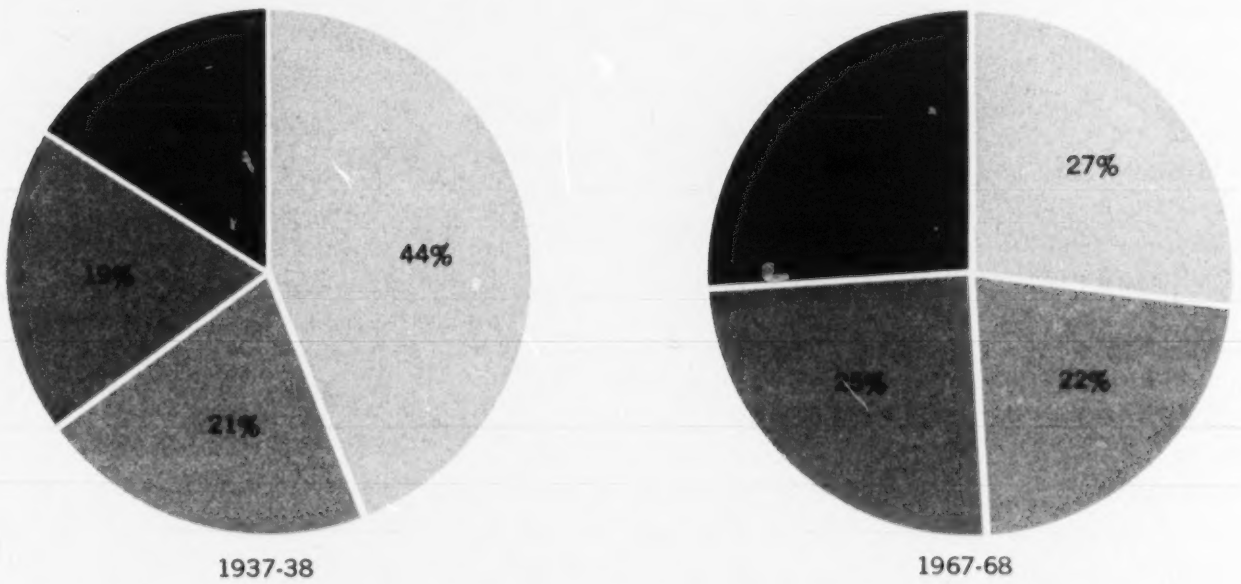
With regard to larger institutions, although little empirical evidence is available, Arthur Browne, Executive Director of the State of Wisconsin Coordinating Council for Higher Education, suggests that the optimum size is in the range of 12,000-15,000 students. Clark Kerr recommends maximum enroll-

FIGURE 1
Percentage of Students Attending Institutions of Various Sizes, U.S., 1937-38, 1959-60 and 1967-68



SOURCE: Donald J. Reichard, *Campus Size: A Selective Review* (Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 1971), p. 1.

FIGURE 2
Percentage of Institutions of Various Sizes, U.S., 1937-38 and 1967-68



ment ranges of 2,000 to 5,000 for community colleges, 5,000 to 10,000 for comprehensive colleges and 10,000 to 15,000 for universities.

The problem which most higher education institutions have yet to face is that of growing large gracefully. All too often institutions have pointed with great pride to their rapid growth (for example, from 5,661 to 21,000 students at Kent State University or from 2,064 to 11,000 students at SUNY at Albany in the course of 10-15 years) rather than the increased quality of their academic programs.

Only infrequently have institutions voluntarily set an enrollment ceiling and plotted a method of reaching that enrollment which allows for adequate academic planning, recruitment of faculties, and acquisition of libraries and other facilities. Thus Towson State (Maryland) College's announced intention to set and stick to an enrollment ceiling of 8,500 by increasing enrollment at the rate of about five percent per year over a seven-year period was unusual in that it would, in the words of its president, James L. Fisher, "enable the college to expand its programming in an orderly fashion without the overwhelming problems attendant with exponential growth experienced on many campuses."

It often appears that the bases for dividing the university up into more manageable colleges, departments or divisions seem to have escaped even the university administrators themselves. While the number of academic departments as well as research bureaus and institutes increases, knowledge (as it is conveyed to the student) becomes more and more fragmented.

THE CLUSTER COLLEGE

In an attempt to preserve the unity of knowledge and deal more effectively with the problems of great and small size, the American university has in recent years rediscovered the concept of collegial organization. The concept stresses the clustering of colleges around one university center and is often associated with the founding of Oxford University in the mid-twelfth century.

To date, as Jerry Gaff notes in *The Cluster College*, there have been many variations in cluster college organization, with two predominant organizational forms emerging—the federated or cooperative college approach and the subcollege approach. A federation is a close association of two or more colleges which are geographically contiguous and which share, to a significant extent, their educational resources. Fed-

erated colleges have corporate independence and are not to be confused with mergers such as Carnegie-Mellon or the pairing of coordinate institutions such as Harvard and Radcliffe. Subcollege organization, by way of contrast, is characterized by the presence of smaller, semi-autonomous colleges within a single, larger university.

The Claremont Colleges in California were the first to adopt the federated form of cluster college organization in 1925, followed shortly thereafter by the establishment of the Atlanta University Center of Higher Education in 1929. Survival, economy, the desire for a more personal environment, a greater chance for innovation, a remedy for isolation and advancement of coeducational opportunities have been stressed as important motivating factors in the establishment of federated cluster colleges. Through the federated approach, colleges attempt to obtain the benefits of large size in terms of additional resources and possible economies of scale while retaining small size and expressing a distinctive educational philosophy.

The subcollege pattern of cluster college organization appeared initially in 1959 with the establishment of Montieth College at Wayne State University. It strives to create smallness out of bigness. Subcollege advocates stress advantages thought to be associated with a small, personalized learning environment; a distinctive educational philosophy; opportunities for innovation and experimentation; and/or access to the services and resources of the larger university. Organizationally, some universities have chosen to divide the entire institution into subcolleges as at Santa Cruz or San Diego while elsewhere—as at Wayne State and Hofstra—the intent is to provide experimental units.

The cluster college movement appears to be winning more general acceptance. Figure 3 does not indicate all institutions which have adopted one form or another of cluster organization. However, it does give some idea of the growth of the cluster college movement. Within the SREB region, the University of Virginia's plans to create a number of affiliated residential colleges recently won the editorial endorsement of the *Richmond Times Dispatch* which noted that the cluster college form of organization:

> . . . would certainly appear to be compatible with Jefferson's original "living-learning" design of U. Va., and it is a scheme more and more universities may want to adopt in an attempt to avoid the impersonality of massive growth.

Another endorsement of the cluster college concept appeared in the report of the Assembly on University Goals and Governance. The report recommended:

> Large institutions should create programs and facilities that provide the option of a more intimate scale; this can be accomplished at some places through creating a variety of small colleges within the larger campus, or through other, more modest ventures.

Finally, a recommendation of the Scranton Commission on Campus Unrest stated:

> Very large universities should seriously consider decentralization of their current sites or geographical dispersal of some of their units . . . . The idea of cluster colleges—small units whose definition of purpose is shared by students and faculty members with common interests—seems particularly promising.

The types of students and faculty members which the subcollege pattern or organization attract have generally been quite different from their counterparts in the larger, traditional, "parent" universities. Subcollege students have been described as "more inclined toward intellectual involvement and more likely to de-emphasize the vocational and certification aspects of college than are their peers in traditional institutions." At the same time, cluster college faculty "were found to be more open to challenging conventional approaches to liberal education and more apt to indicate the importance of interdisciplinary courses and faculty contact across disciplinary lines than faculty in traditional settings."

The federated or cooperative college approach appears to offer possible economies of scale and greater access to services than would be obtainable by an individual college. However, the subcollege pattern of organization, as long as it enjoys a lower faculty/student ratio than the larger "parent" institution, will require higher per student expenditures. One must be able to afford to be small.

Cluster college curricular organization typically focuses upon interdisciplinary areas of knowledge such as humanities, social science, or natural science. At times the curricular offerings are characterized by a "problems" approach. Regardless of how knowledge is organized, the instructional process is often characterized by independent study, student-initiated seminars, tutorials, community government, interpersonal relationships with students and faculty, or by variations in residential and academic year arrangements.

Cluster, particularly subcollege, organization requires a degree of autonomy from the regulations of

FIGURE 3

Representative Colleges with Subcolleges

Institution	*Location*	*Control*
Wayne State University	Detroit, Michigan	Public
Wesleyan University	Middletown, Connecticut	Private
University of the Pacific	Stockton, California	Private
University of California, Santa Cruz	Santa Cruz, California	Public
Goddard College	Plainfield, Vermont	Private
Hofstra University	Hempstead, New York	Private
Michigan State University	East Lansing, Michigan	Public
Oakland University	Rochester, Michigan	Public
University of California, San Diego	San Diego, California	Public
Fordham University	Bronx, New York	Private
University of Michigan	Ann Arbor, Michigan	Public
*City University of New York, Kingsborough Community College	New York, New York	Public
Western Washington State College	Bellingham, Washington	Public
Rutgers—The State University of New Jersey	New Brunswick, New Jersey	Public
Colby College	Waterville, Maine	Private
Grand Valley State College	Allendale, Michigan	Public
University of Nebraska	Lincoln, Nebraska	Public
Redlands University	Redlands, California	Private
St. Edward's University	Austin, Texas	Private
St. Olaf College	Northfield, Minnesota	Private
Sonoma State College	Rohnert Park, California	Public
University of Vermont	Burlington, Vermont	Public
*DeAnza College	Cupertino, California	Public
*Chabot College (Planning stage)	Hayward, California	Public
*San Joaquin Delta College (Planning stage)	Stockton, California	Public
*Cypress College	Cypress, California	Public
*Pima College	Tucson, Arizona	Public
*College of Dupage	Glen Ellyn, Illinois	Public

*Two-year colleges

the larger university. At the same time the subcollege is dependent upon the larger university which governs the supply of faculty and policies by which subcollege faculty are promoted. If strong assurances of support are not present at the time they are established, subcolleges may fall victim to the general tendency to oppose innovations or anything out of the ordinary. More must be known in regard to the various impacts which subcolleges have upon the larger university.

Despite evident difficulties, however, the cluster college in its varied forms does pose a number of potentially viable alternatives for dealing effectively with size. Most important, perhaps, is the fact that it focuses primary attention upon providing high quality undergraduate education experiences at a time in which graduate education and basic research have dominated the interests of college and university faculties.

THE UPPER DIVISION COLLEGE

Within the last few years another new type of higher education institution, the upper division college—

offering instruction for juniors and seniors as well as occasional master's and doctoral programs—has received increased attention. At present only nine such institutions exist in the country. Five additional colleges have tentative plans to begin instruction within the next two years. (Figure 4)

The upper division pattern is aimed at creating a different type of institution to carry out a specialized function—that of providing junior, senior and perhaps some graduate instruction for a geographically defined population. A substantial increase in the number of junior and senior enrollments within a state system of higher education due to the vastly expanded number of community college graduates has been the prime factor in the recent establishment of upper division colleges.

Originally, the upper division college was the logical outcome of bisecting the traditional four-year college into its "preparatory" and "university" components. The establishment of the heavily research-oriented graduate institutions such as Johns Hopkins, Stanford and the University of Chicago created pressures to subtract from the university that work which was "general, liberal, or preparatory," leaving only that which was "truly university" in nature. The establishment of the first public junior college at Joliet, Illinois, in 1902 permitted this specialization of function.

By 1960, there were only four upper division colleges in the U.S. The growth in number of junior colleges (from 678 in 1961 to 933 in 1968) and in the number of junior college students (from 748,619 to 1,954,116 in the same period) has helped to establish a substantial pool of institutions and students from which the upper division colleges may draw. Thus, for example, the University of West Florida, an upper division college which opened in 1967, has drawn 82 percent of its students as direct graduates from accredited community colleges in Florida and nearby states. This institution has also adopted many of the features associated with the subcollege pattern of cluster college organization.

FIGURE 4

Upper Division Colleges

Planning Stage	*Location*	*Control*
State University of New York at Utica	Utica, New York	Public
Governors State University	Park Forest, Illinois	Public
University of Texas of the Permian Basin	Odessa, Texas	Public
University of North Florida	Jacksonville, Florida	Public
Florida International University	Miami, Florida	Public
Baccalaureate		
Concordia Senior College	Fort Wayne, Indiana	Private
Walsh College	Troy, Michigan	Private
Pacific Oaks College	Pasadena, California	Private
Graduate Degree		
Richmond College	Staten Island, New York	Public
Pennsylvania State University, Capitol Campus	Middletown, Pennsylvania	Public
Sangamon State University	Springfield, Illinois	Public
University of West Florida	Pensacola, Florida	Public
Florida Atlantic University	Boca Raton, Florida	Public
Otis Art Institute	Los Angeles, California	Public

In practice, it has fallen to the upper division college to play a unique role in the higher education system by serving the needs of the 50-70 percent of "career" program community junior college graduates who choose to continue their education. The upper division college often provides a commuter-oriented setting where community college graduates of any age have an opportunity to earn a baccalaureate or higher degree.

Problems of articulation between institutions are lessened considerably when a number of community colleges in close proximity serve as "feeders" for a single upper division college. Similarly, three-year master's programs which enable a student to proceed from his junior year to a master's degree without changing institutions help to improve the articulation between graduate and undergraduate education. By separating the four-year college experience into two separate units of two years each, additional entrance and exit points are created in the educational system. The student is forced to continuously evaluate his own educational objectives. Thus he is not automatically locked into a four-year program which may hold little interest for him but which must be completed if he is to have something to show for his efforts.

Due to the relatively high costs associated with small class size and greater diversity in program offerings, it would seem that the ideal size of an upper division college should be somewhat greater than in traditional four-year liberal arts colleges. Florida Atlantic University has estimated its optimum size to be about 5,000 students. A flow of 5,000 students through an institution in two to three years, as opposed to four or five years in traditional senior institutions, means that upper division colleges should be located near large centers of population.

Robert A. Altman, author of *The Upper Division College* and executive secretary of a newly formed association of upper division colleges, notes that planning for upper division colleges is complicated

FIGURE 5

Cluster and Upper Division Colleges in the U.S.

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by an inability to assume a constant and direct flow of students from the sophomore to the junior year, which normally occurs in a four-year college situation.

Community college transfer students, if they have the financial means to continue their education in a residential setting, are often attracted by the glamour of the larger university. At the same time it is difficult to predict when, where, or how many graduates of so-called terminal or "career" programs will seek further education. Failure to attract enough students was the main reason why three of the four upper division colleges in existence in 1960 have since become four-year operations.

The fact that the upper division college is in open competition for students with all other public and private institutions in its region or state means that it must be especially careful not to neglect the needs of its clientele—largely products of junior college occupational, vocational and technical programs. This suggests greater emphasis upon preparation for the Bachelor of Science in Technology degree as opposed to degrees in the liberal arts as a likely development in the future.

To date, Florida has taken the greatest initiative in establishing upper division colleges. Florida chose not to vastly increase the size of its existing publicly supported baccalaureate granting institutions—the University of Florida, Florida State University, and the University of South Florida—in order to accommodate a rapidly increasing number of community college graduates. Instead, a decision was made to create a new type of institution which could serve a new type of clientele in the various regions of the state.

In states where a "feeder" system of local community colleges exists or is being developed and a small number of publicly supported baccalaureate institutions fail to equitably serve the needs of all areas of a state, higher education planners may wish to seriously consider the establishment of upper division colleges.

SUMMARY

The cluster college and upper division patterns of organization have yet to be subject to thorough evaluation. They appear to have great potential for bringing change to an increasingly rigid system of higher education. They offer opportunities for implementing programs based on distinctive educational philosophies as well as opportunities for dealing effectively with the problems created by great or small size. As alternatives to traditionalism and as means of combating the homogenization of higher education, the cluster and upper division college patterns of organization deserve the serious consideration of higher education planners.

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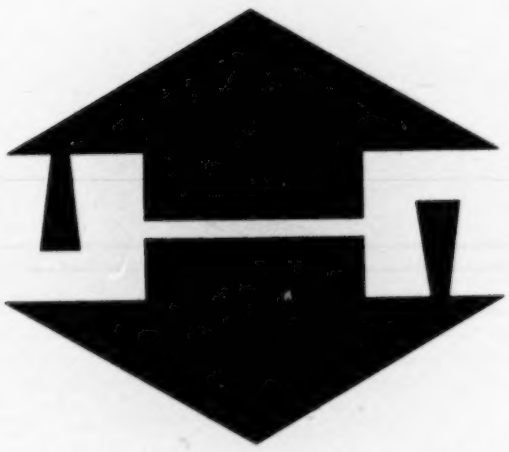

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